IN THE CLAIMS:

The pending claims are as follows:

1. (Previously presented) A network switch stack configuration, said configuration comprising:

a first network switch comprising a plurality of data ports, a first stacking port, a first internet port interface controller, and a first CPU interface;

a second network switch having a plurality of data ports, a second stacking port, a second internet port interface controller, and a second CPU interface; and

a common CPU connected to said first CPU interface and said second CPU interface;

wherein the first stacking port and the second stacking port are communicatively connected through said first and second internet port interface controllers, such that incoming packets on any of the plurality of data ports on the first and second switches are effectively switched to any of the plurality of data ports on either of the first and second network switches; and

wherein the first switch adds a module headers having module identifier fields, providing a source module ID of the first switch, to the incoming packets and the second stacking port reads the module headers to determine egress ports for the packets.

2. (Original) A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein said common CPU is configured to program functions on the first and second network switch, and wherein the common CPU controls communication between the first and second network switch.

3. (Original) A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein each of said first and second stacking ports include an arbiter thereupon, for allocating communication bandwidth between the first and second stacking port.

4. (Original) A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein each of said first and second stacking ports includes flow control logic for controlling data flow to and from each of the first and second network switches, respectively.

5. (Original) A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 3, wherein each arbiter is configured to alternate bandwidth access by alternating transmission and reception of data based upon a predetermined algorithm.

6. (Previously Presented) A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second stacking ports are configured to forward the packets to the egress ports without requiring a lookup in an address resolution table.

7. (Previously presented) A method for routing packets in a network switch stack configuration, the method comprising:

communicatively connecting a first stacking port and a second stacking port, wherein a first network switch includes said first stacking port and a second network switch includes said second stacking port;

adding module headers having module identifier fields, providing a source module ID of the first switch, to incoming packets on any of a plurality of data ports by said first switch;

reading the module headers by the second stacking ports to determine egress ports for said incoming packets; and

switching said incoming packets to said egress ports via at least one internet port interface controller, said egress ports including any of the plurality of data ports on either of the first and second network switches.